

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 ANKARA 03794 171352Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
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R 171247Z MAY 77
FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7534
INFO AMEMBASSY ATHENS
AMEMBASSY NICOSIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 3794

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, PINT, TU, US
SUBJECT: CONCERNS OF TURKISH "VICE-PRESIDENT"

1. MORNING OF MAY 17, TURKISH SENATE PRESIDENT, TEKIN ARIBURUN, CAME TO MY OFFICE TO UNDERSCORE HIS SERIOUS CONCERNS OVER PRESENT SITUATION. (ARIBURUN'S POSITION IN TURKISH GOVERNMENT IS ROUGLY EQUIVALENT TO OUR VICE-PRESIDENT'S. HE PRESIDES OVER THE SENATE. HIS PROTOCOL RANK IN THE TURKISH HIERARCHY IS SECOND ONLY TO THE PRESIDENT'S, AND HE ACTS FOR THE PRESIDENT WHEN THE LATTER IS AWAY OR INCAPACITATED. UNLIKE OUR VICE-PRESIDENT, HOWEVER, HE HAS NO ACTIVE SUPPLEMENTARY DAY-TO-DAY ROLE IN THE TURKISH GOVERNMENT'S EXECUTIVE, AS OPPOSED TO ITS LEGISLATIVE, FUNCTIONS.)

2. ARIBURUN FIRST VISITED THE UNITED STATES OVER 35 YEARS AGO, AND HAS BEEN A LONG-TIME SUPPORTER OF THE US-TURKISH PARTNERSHIP. THE FEARS HE EXPRESSED ARE WIDELY HELD HERE BY SUPPORTERS OF THE US/TURKISH PARTNERSHIP AND HAVE BEEN PREVIOUSLY AND REPEATEDLY SET FORTH IN EARLIER EMBASSY REPORTING. I AM BRIEFLY REPEATING THEM, HOWEVER, BECAUSE OF ARIBURUN'S PLACE IN GOVERNMENT AND
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 ANKARA 03794 171352Z

THE FACT THAT HE MADE A SPECIAL TRIP TO THE EMBASSY TO UNDERSCORE THEM.

3. ARIBURUN'S FIRST CONCERN WAS THAT TIME WAS RUNNING OUT ON THE US/TURKISH PARTNERSHIP. HE STRESSED THAT OUR RELATIONSHIP WOULD DETERIORATE IN THE RELATIVELY NEAR FUTURE IF THE ADMINISTRATION IS NOT ABLE TO GET CURRENT

CONGRESSIONAL POLICIES REVERSED SOON. SECONDLY, HE SAID THAT AS A FORMER CHIEF OF THE AIR FORCE, HE WAS IN TOUCH WITH THE CURRENT TURKISH AIR FORCE LEADERSHIP, AND THEY ADVISED HIM THAT THE DIFFICULTIES CAUSED FOR THE AIR FORCE BY THE EMBARGO WERE FAR GREATER THAN THE AIR FORCE LEADERSHIP HAD EVER PUBLICLY CONCEDED. THE DANGERS OF AN OUTBREAK OF FIGHTING IN THE AEGEAN WOULD BE SIGNIFICANTLY INCREASED, SAID ARIBURUN, IF TURKISH MILITARY LEADERS BECAME CONVINCED THAT THE INEVITABLE CONSEQUENCE OF CONTINUING US POLICIES WERE TO BE THE EVENTUAL REDUCTION OF TURKISH AIR STRENGTH TO A LEVEL SIGNIFICANTLY BELOW THAT OF THE GREEKS. FINALLY, ARIBURUN EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT AMERICANS DID NOT UNDERSTAND THAT THEY WERE DEALING WITH A VERY FRAGILE GOVERNMENTAL PICTURE HERE, WHICH, IN TURN, MEANT THAT THE TWO DANGERS HE HAD ALLUDED TO WERE MORE LIKELY TO MATERIALIZE THAN WOULD BE THE CASE IF THE SYSTEM WERE PRODUCING MORE EFFECTIVE TURKISH GOVERNMENTS. ENLARGING ON THIS LATTER POINT, HE SAID THAT UNFORTUNATELY THERE WERE MANY PEOPLE ARGUING THAT DEMOCRACY HAD COME TOO SOON IN TURKEY. ARIBURUN FEARED THAT ONE OF THESE DAYS THE TURKS "WILL PUT DEMOCRACY ASIDE AND GO LOOKING FOR ANOTHER ATATURK".

4. I SAID THAT I AGREED WITH A NUMBER OF HIS CONCERNS, AND THAT I HOPED BEFORE TOO MUCH LONGER IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE TO GET THE US/TURKISH PARTNERSHIP BACK ON COURSE. I ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THIS WOULD REQUIRE A FURTHER EFFORT ON THE PART OF USG TO GET RID OF THE EMBARGO SITUATION, BUT I ALSO EMPHASIZED THAT IT WOULD REQUIRE PATIENCE ON PART OF CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 ANKARA 03794 171352Z

TURKISH LEADERS WHO SHOULD NOT REPEAT NOT SUCCUMB TO SHORT-TERM FRUSTRATIONS AT THE LONG-TERM EXPENSE OF TURKEY'S BASIC SECURITY INTERESTS. I ALSO STRONGLY ARGUED FOR TH NEED FOR MUTUAL TURKISH AND GREEK RESTRAINT IN THE AEGEAN. I SAID THAT WHILE I PERSONALLY WAS OPPOSED TO THE LINKAGE OF THE US/CYPRUS SITUATION TO THE US/TURKISH SECURITY PARTNERSHIP, AS A PRACTICAL MATTER, THE TWO HAD BEEN CONNECTED, AND IN ANY EVENT, TURKEY'S NATIONAL INTERESTS, AND ITS WORLD PUBLIC RELATIONS INTERESTS, REQUIRE THAT THE GOT ADOPT A MORE FLEXIBLE STANCE WITH RESPECT TO A CYPRUS SOLUTION.
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Message Attributes

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